



# California Department of Veterans Affairs

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## NEWS FOR VETERANS

Contact: Robert Glazier  
Jerry Jones  
Jaime Arteaga  
Legislation and Public Affairs  
916-653-2192  
Fax 916-653-2611  
May 27, 2004

### ONE NATION, ONE MOMENT

Memorial Day, 3PM

#### Pause to Remember America's Fallen Wherever You Are

*"The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart...should swell into a mighty chorus of remembrance, gratitude and rededication on this solemn occasion." ABRAHAM LINCOLN*

For more information on the National Moment of Remembrance go to  
<http://www.remember.gov/moment/downloads.cfm>

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#### BOOK SIGNING

Col. Edwin Ramsey, leader of the last cavalry charge of the United States Army, will be signing his book "LIEUTENANT RAMSEY'S WAR, From Horse Soldier to Guerrilla Commander" at the California State Military Museum and Resource Center, 1119 Second St., Sacramento, CA 95814, this Saturday, May 29, 2004 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information contact: Brig. Gen. Don Mattson, 916.442.2883

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#### VA SECRETARY PRINCIPI ANNOUNCES CARES DECISIONS

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi recently announced details of a comprehensive plan to modernize the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. The plan includes new hospitals in Orlando and Las Vegas, 156 new community clinics, four new spinal cord injury centers, two blind rehabilitation centers and expanded mental health outpatient services nationwide.

The investment of nearly \$1 billion annually for several years is the result of a major three-year review of the medical system serving America's 25 million veterans.

The three-year review called CARES stands for "Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Service." It was a landmark study of the nation's largest health care system, which is operated by VA. CARES assessed veterans' current health care needs and developed recommendations for meeting those needs in the future.

By opening health care access to more veterans, VA expects to increase the percentage of enrolled

veterans from 28 percent of the veterans' population today, to 30 percent in 2012 and 33 percent in 2022.

The decisions announced by Secretary Principi include: construction of new medical centers in Orlando, Fla., and Las Vegas, Nev., creation of more than 150 new community-based outpatient clinics, rehabilitation and modernization of medical centers, potential creation of four new - and expansion of five existing - spinal cord injury centers; and opening up two new blind rehabilitation centers.

In some cases, the plan also calls for transferring care from antiquated facilities to more modern or better located VA facilities or contracting for care in local communities.

Full details about the secretary's decision are available on the Internet at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

Dr. Jonathan Perlin, VA's acting under secretary for health noted the realignment will also enable VA to avoid imbalances in its services in the future, by making sure the size and location of its health care facilities match the needs of veterans.

In July 1999, the General Accounting Office estimated that VA diverted a million dollars a day from health care to maintenance of unneeded or unused facilities. Most VA facilities are more than 50 years old, although the industry standard for health care in the private sector is less than 10 years.

On Aug. 4, 2003, the VA unveiled a 100-page draft national plan that was developed by VA's staff. That plan was reviewed by an independent, 16-member CARES commission which presented its own recommendations to Principi on February 13, 2004, after conducting 38 public hearings, 10 public meetings, hearing from 770 witnesses and receiving written comments from more than 212,000 people.

Last year, VA health care workers treated about 4.8 million patients, up from 2.9 million in 1998. The president's budget requests \$29.5 billion for VA's medical care for next year, more than 40 percent above the level in 2001.

People wishing to receive e-mail from VA with the latest news releases and updated fact sheets can subscribe at the following Internet address: [http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist\\_listserv.cfm](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm)

[http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/docs/CA\\_CARES.doc](http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/docs/CA_CARES.doc)

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